

DO YOU KNOW HARDCORE? #3

INTERVIEW WITH FREDDY ALVA

INTRO - Welcome to issue three. The New Breed compilation came about as an extension of Freddy Alva's fanzine, also called New Breed. His friend, Chaka Malik (Burn), agreed to collaborate on getting a bunch of the newer bands on the scene circa 1987-1989 and put them on a tape compilation. The compilation was released on Urban Style Records in 1989, a name that perfectly reflected the music and the environment in which it existed, because the bands of "the New Breed era" were more creative and expanded outside of that earlier NYC formula. The tape is chock full of classic NYHC, featuring influential hardcore groups such as Breakdown, Raw Deal, Beyond, Abombanation, Pressure Release, Our Gang. In this issue we are talking about his fanzine editing experiences (FTW fanzine, New Breed fanzine) and the 80s zine culture. The most important thing is that Freddy is a super cool guy, and he scanned his both zines for us. You can feel free to download these old zines (FTW fanzine and New Breed fanzine) from my blog, check out the site at doyouknowhardcore.com/! Just use the search function and type "New Breed fanzine". It's always a great pleasure to interview Freddy Alva, thanks for your support buddy! Do You Know Hardcore? is a free zine, feel free to make copies for your friends, just please don't sell it. Peace, Ati - **Contact:** instagram @atimental / email - meheszattila@yahoo.com / Cat logo by the legendary Dylan Chadwick - @drugdogs.

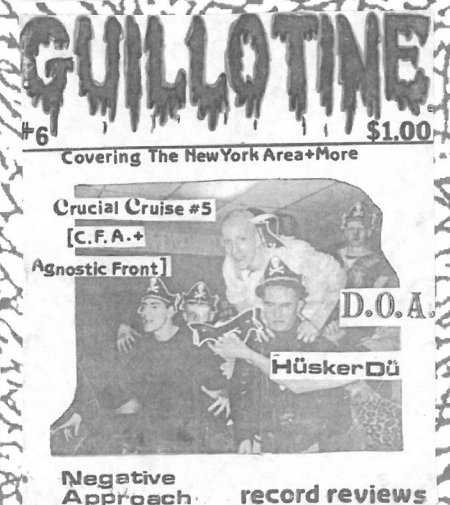
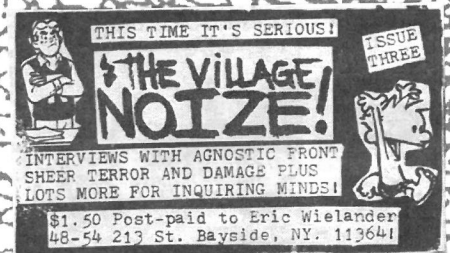
My town had absolutely no tradition in hardcore in the early 2000s. I had been into underground music for a while, but I wasn't able to start a band. I was really motivated to contribute something. I wanted to do something to be an active part of the scene, so I decided I will make a fanzine. Working on my fanzine was my entrance into the scene. Part of your weekly ritual was to go to Some Records and buy new demo tapes, records, fanzines. Some Records was a crucial meeting place for band members, zine editors, and other hardcore kids that would help launch that second wave of NYHC in 1986. Was there a palpable sense of community what inspires you to do a fanzine? What motivated you to start your zine? Freddy: My biggest motivation in doing a zine was just to get involved with the scene, besides just going to shows & hanging out. I couldn't play any instruments or sing so this seemed like the next best thing. I was attending a high school at the time, that also had a technical program, meaning you could learn to fix airplanes besides the regular HS curriculum. I wasn't particularly good with tools and had no interest or aptitude in becoming a mechanic but the one class I did enjoy was drafting; that's where you learned the rudimentary skills needed to do diagrams/blueprints. This little bit of knowledge helped me to figure out how to do my own zine after scooping up all the available ones of the day, national ones like MRR/Flipside and local fare like Guillotine and The Big Takeover. There was definitely a sense of community hanging out at places like Some Records, the Pyramid & CBGB's matinees; it really motivated you to be a part of and somehow document this incredible scene. So many NYHC pioneers like Kraut, Reagan Youth, Urban Waste, Murphy's Law and more were from out there in Astoria, Queens. A lots of second wave bands like Token Entry, Gorilla Biscuits, Leeway were from Queens. Koller bros from Queens, all five original members of Outburst attended St. John's Preparatory, Astoria's Catholic high school, and Raw Deal was fronted by Queens native Anthony Comunale too. What was the situation with the fanzine scene, were there any fanzines from Queens too? Yes, Queens was a hotbed of fanzines, to start off, the one that immediately comes to mind is Unite, done by an old friend from my Jackson Heights neighborhood named James Damion. I actually met James at summer camp in 1980, we went to the same Junior High and both got into HC in late 1985. Around the same time Guillotine editor Wendy Eager moved to Jackson Heights from Brooklyn and she was a big inspiration to us, having been around since the first wave of NYHC and still cranking out a fanzine that was hugely influential. New Breed number one was done with my friend Chris Wynne from College Point, Queens, who helped me out with interviews and reviews, doing this inspired him to do his own thing and that became In Effect fanzine. From the northern Queens neighborhoods of Flushing and Bayside came The Village Noise and Yes Zista, done by Eric Wielander and Chris Bunkley respectively. A zine that had been around since all we got into the scene was Bullshit Monthly, done by Mike Bullshit from Queens Village. Mark Sokoll from Flushing, Queens band Terminal Confusion did Book of Armageddon, more on the crossover/trash metal side. Bayside also had Just Lies & Right Trash, done by Charlie Adamec & Rich Oliver respectively. One more I need to mention is Last Daze, done by Gina Lawson, she was a Brooklyn girl but hung out in our neighborhood so much and most of the bands she interviewed were Queens bands so we consider her from around our way. RIP Gina.



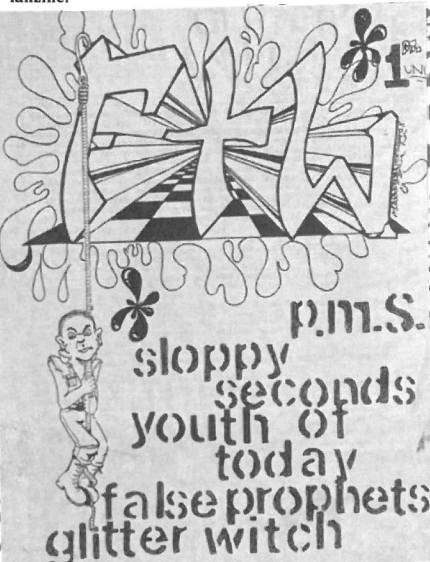
What were some of the other zines from the 1980s that inspired you? Were there any fanzines, magazines, writers that you particularly looked to for inspiration? The one thing that really influenced me and made my fanzine addition grow is a store called See Hear, which only carried fanzines & some music related books, located a few blocks from Some Records. It was there that I picked up zines like Suburban Voice, XXX, Sold Out & tons of others; I especially loved Jack Rabid from The Big Takeover's writing style; it was so passionate about a particular band that he championed and it made you want to seek them out as well. I also dug Pushead's top 100 list that came out in MRR; I tried to track down as many releases as possible on it. I also dug Forced Exposure's acerbic writing style, by the time they'd grown away from HC & were always putting down anything post '86, that stuff cracked me up and I appreciated their desire to cover more esoteric stuff which led me to Kraut Rock, Free Jazz and post-HC noisy dissonant sounds. I actually ended up working at See Hear in the early 90's so reading all those zines back then helped me land the job! The New Breed tape compilation came about as an extension of your fanzine, the inspiration of your compilation comes from the legendary Guillotine benefit compilation tape called "United Scene". Fortunately I got a chance to read some Guillotine issues. Wendy Eager did a great job with that fanzine. What are your memories of this fanzine? Do you have any memories of the Guillotine benefit gigs? Like I previously mentioned, Wendy from Guillotine was a huge inspiration, her fanzine set the standard for what a NYHC zine should look like and to have her living in our neighborhood was extra cool. The first issue I picked was number #9, the one with John Joseph on the cover and I just missed attending the Guillotine benefit show in the summer of '85 as I didn't go to my first show 'til September of that year. I was able to pick up the resulting 'United Scene' compilation tape that featured two songs from each band, that played the benefit, pretty sure that was the first comp tape I picked up at Some Records the following year. That tape directly influenced me to do my own New Breed comp later on so I have a lot thank Wendy for: I literally copied her print & tape endeavors, sincerely hope a Guillotine anthology comes out one day.



Fanzine culture was a lot different back then in the pre-internet age. But I think that they are still important for die hard hardcore fans, important for promoting music communities and gatekeeping music tastes. Fanzines are still a genuine part of the scene to people who are genuinely interested in it. What's your opinion on this? I think the accessibility and relative low financial inversion is a huge factor in people still doing HC/Punk fanzines these days; one can do a xeroxed stapled issue very inexpensively and the end result resonates with people looking for a tangible object to hold and peruse through. Of course the advent of advanced layout computer resources can help you do a very slick, professional looking product but in the end I think the actual physicality of whatever you choose to do, be it either low or high tech, is what's important as we're bombarded with endless info and images in the virtual world; it's nice to have something to flip through one's fingers and it's something that time has not diminished in subcultures such as ours.



The graffiti and hardcore connection, these two distinct subcultures criss-crossed and fed off one another during the 1980s. You have always loved the visual side of tapes, records, fanzines like lyric sheets, inserts, fanzine covers. Please tell me something about the cover of FTW fanzine! Was it the first appearance of graffiti letters on the cover of a NYHC fanzine? The cover of my first zine (FTW) was done by someone I met my first day of High School, a Graffiti writer by the name of ROTE, when I started going to shows I met a lot of kids like me that came from a hip-hop background and a big part of that was Graffiti. My friend ROTE saw me as a full on b-boy freshman year and transition to hanging out with the skins/metalheads by the following school year. While he never got into the scene, his skills were off the chart and I wanted to bring that vibe and as far as I can tell it's the first instance of Graf letters on a NYHC fanzine.



The first interview you ever did was with Ray Cappo outside of the legendary Some Records in 1986 for your pre-New Breed fanzine called FTW. Hardcore is a very aggressive and combative style, and Ray brought a lot of intelligence to the genre with his extremely philosophical lyrics. He had an unusual talent to make changes in the scene. How was your first time meeting Youth Of Today, and why did you find it necessary to do an interview with YOT? YOT were amazing live in '86, don't think any of their records ever captured that and whether you were straight edge or not (I wasn't) they were undeniably influential at a crucial point during the second wave of NYHC that had kicked off by then. Ray was an extremely charismatic frontman that lived and breathed Hardcore and that a ripple effect on everyone that he came in contact with so I had to including him in the zine. I'd never done a live interview with anyone before but I decided to go for it; Ray was extreme cool about it, suggesting we do it outside Some Records minutes after I asked him if he'd ever be into answering some questions. One of the strongest memories I have is of various local scenesters passing by and commenting, in particular Jules from Side By Side, decked out in full boots & braces gear. I shouldn't have worried because I picked the best person interview, as soon as I turned the tape recorder on, Ray was off & running; the same relentless energy he exhibited on stage was present in person. Belated thanks to him for making my initial foray into zinedom a smooth one! You started New Breed fanzine in 1987 as a way of getting more actively involved in the scene. Why did you change the name of the zine from FTW to New Breed? FTW was done with a guy named Howard Charkofsky that was living in my neighborhood, he was an older Punk dude that had grown up on the L.E.S. and I remember seeing him at CBGB's matinees, saw him around my way, somehow started talking and discovered we both wanted to do a fanzine so we just joined forces. I did two of the interviews in that issue, one with Glitter Witch (by mail) and Ray Cappo (in person). I also did some demo/Lp/live show reviews and besides coming up with the FTW name; I also got my friend to do the cover. We never did a second issue because by that time I wanted to collaborate with some other friends from the scene and we talked about doing a zine that concentrated primarily on up and coming local bands, hence the name New Breed, which I took from the Iron Cross song that appeared on the Flex Your Head comp. It's lyrics resonated strongly with what me and what my friends were about.

PRESSURE RELEASE

"PRISON OF MY OWN" EP OUT SMOKE 15TH (N.A.#2)



There was a bulletin board at Some Records. Hardcore kids used to post all sorts of flyers, advertisements and trade lists. Have you ever used this bulletin board? Yeah those bulletin boards were a lot of fun to read, mostly people looking for bands to join or form but from time to time you'd see someone selling their "slightly worn Doc Marten 12-hole boots" for example, kind of like a proto-Craigslist. Another Ad I would see is people looking to trade live sets, be it on cassette or video; I recall making some life long friends that way by posting my want list. Like Carl from Raw Deal said in my New Breed Documentary, 'Some Records was more than a store, it was a place you could find like-minded people to start a band' or make friends and the bulletin board was a vital component towards that end. There is an opinion that so many bands would have never become the popular bands they did so quickly if it wasn't for Duane selling their demos is Some Records. What do you think about this? Yes most definitely, some people recorded a demo just so it could be sold at Some Records and to have Duane tell you it had sold out and bring some more down, well that was the ultimate compliment. A mainly demos market developed at Some since Lp's were twice the price and cassettes far outsold them. I remember bands with only a demo recorded a few months back get a stronger reaction at CBGB than touring bands with extensive discographies. Some Records was a huge catalyst for newer bands to get recognized at a faster rate than before.

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How did you handle distribution? Did you do a lot of mailorder? I recall putting an ad in a couple of friends zines but the bulk of issue #1 were sold outside of CBGB's and at See Hear/Some Records, there were only a couple of hundred issues printed. For the second issue, which is the Compilation Tape, me & Chaka sold them at the Anthrax, Pyramid club & the Ritz hotel shows. We also paid for an ad in MRR that got us a lot of mailorders so we didn't really have any distribution per se, we did it all ourselves. Another way is once kids saw my home address, they would randomly ring my doorbell looking for the comp, that's just the way things were back then. Raw Deal interview. I know that you lived about ten blocks from Anthony Commune in 1986. How was your relationship with him and the band? A few years later they were also featured on the New Breed tape compilation. Anthony was the pied piper of HC in our neighborhood of Jackson Heights. Even though he had already graduated high school by the time I was a sophomore and had been in the scene since pretty much the beginning; he was never condescending or too cool to talk to us younger new jacks. He was extremely generous with letting people tape records from his collection and would recommend an Album or Ep to check out that would turn always turn out to be amazing. He'd also been the original singer for Token Entry and once he got together with 3/5ths of what had been Breakdown, at the suggestion of Duane from Some Records, the end result being Raw Deal. We had to have them on the comp as they represented everything we wanted to document; a newer wave of NYHC that needed to be heard.

Who were the folks that helped you with FTW/New Breed along the way? I know that Pressure Release interview was made by Chris Wynne (In Effect fanzine), he mailed them some questions and about a week later an envelope shows up with the answers. I'd met Chris Wynne through a mutual friend and told him I wanted to do a new zine, he was closer to my age as opposed to Howard from FTW, who was about 10 years older than me. Chris was extremely enthusiastic and started right away interviewing Pressure Release and the NY Hoods. I interviewed Raw Deal and SFA as well as doing the Graf letters in the cover that spell out New Breed plus laying out the zine. Our friend Paul Oxblood did some demo reviews and me and Chris did the rest of the show/lp/zine reviews. I mentioned before that working on this issue inspired Chris to do his own zine so for the second issue of New Breed I collaborated with Chaka Malik and that became the tape compilation.

RAW DEAL



Raw Deal demo tape. Probably the main reason people find it easy to identify with the band's music; they were just angry kids from the neighborhood too, expressing the same problems you were dealing with on a daily basis. Their lyrics were pretty pissed off and kind of realistic too. As far as I know, they have been labelled as an "anger band" and "reality hardcore band". What do you think about this description? I think maybe by the time that Raw Deal Demo came out in 1988, there was a backlash going on against the straight edge/youth crew reputation New York had acquired. While a lot of people liked the music of sxe bands, the preaching & over zealousness rubbed them the wrong way, longing for a less positive but realistic view of their surroundings. That's why the lyrics on that demo really resonated, there's an urban urgency to them, paired with the hard as nails musical delivery and Anthony's ultra-pissed off vocals. It was definitely a game changer, inspiring kids to make even harder bands but to be honest, none came close, as these songs don't sound forced or trying to fit a particular style; just honest and as in your face as you can get. What was your first show at the CBs? Who was on the bill at the first CBs hardcore show you ever attended? I told this story before but a Filipino New Wave kid saw me tagging up names on my school desk in sophomore year of high school and mentioned; 'hey, if you like those bands, you should go down to this place called CBGB's' He ended up taking me there and on the bill that day were Raw Power, Dayglo Abortions, Knockout James. I can't remember who the 4th band was, as there always 4 bands per matinee but all I recall is Raw Power blowing me away, forever making me a diehard fan of loud, fast HC. Dayglo Abortions & Knockout James I don't remember too much of but I've always been seeking the latter one's demo and my new wave friend never went back to CB's after that! Lots of underage fans tried to get into CBGB's numerous times but there was this old lady Mrs. Krystal who checked their fake ID cards, grab them by the collars and throw them out. You were pretty young when you started going to shows at CBGB's. Did you ever have a problem getting in due to a young age? Funny story? I actually just turned 16 when I went to my first show at CBGB's and carried my passport with me for identification so avoided all that fake ID drama, other younger and young looking friends of mine weren't so successful. James from Unite was my age but looked like he was 14 years old so Mrs Krystal at the door was forever hassling him about having a fake ID, think she called his mother a couple of times to confirm his age, she was a trip! The one funny story I can recall doesn't involve ID's but getting one's hand stamped after paying the \$5 to get in, going back outside and your friend wet the back of his palm, then rub your palm on his so some of the ink from the stamp would transfer over, that way he can get in for free. We used to rotate designated people every week to do this, that way like 5-7 of us would get in with only person having paid! Thanks for everything, Freddy. Anything else you'd like to add? Thank you for the in-depth questions, love reminiscing about those days that shaped me in more ways than I'll ever know, 35 years after my first show, Hardcore/Punk still rules for me.



"I DON'T BELIEVE THIS IS YOUR I.D."
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